Theobald, M. (in press). Achieving competence: The interactional features of children's storytelling. *Childhood.*

Introduction

This paper adopts an ethnomethodological and conversation analytic (CA) approach to investigate children's competence "from within" (Speier, 1973) and as achieved *in situ* during children's storytelling. Ethnomethodology demonstrates how members competently produce and manage their everyday social interactions (Sacks, 1995). This paper first examines studies of storytelling and highlights the lack of investigations into the interactional aspects of children's storytelling. Next video-recordings of young children engaged in storytelling in a playground are examined. Findings show how children as storytellers and story recipients use voice-related markers, gesture and physical actions to invoke and achieve competence within their peer group.[1]

Stories in the early years

Stories are reports of experiences that are recreated and revived in new ways (Norrick, 2010). The value of oral narratives for children's literacy skills and cognitive skills in the early years has been well documented and, for at least 30 years, a focus in education, psychology and linguistics. For example, researchers have studied storytelling in a number of areas: children's comprehension of story events and structure (Morrow, 1993; Abbott and McCarthey, 2001); understanding of pictures and text (Arizpe and Styles, 2003); language use (Winch and Poston-Anderson, 1993); social skills in "sharing news" (Nicolopoulou, 1996); recall ability (Brice-Heath, 1983); and multi-literacy understandings (Hill, 2007). The teacher's role in children's storytelling has also been studied (Abbott and McCarthey, 2001).

Perhaps because of the benefits associated with the sharing of oral narratives, storytelling has become a "constructed" activity where specific times (for example, show and tell) are devoted to children's storytelling (and writing) pursuits. During these times, adults most commonly shape the topic, agenda and methods of storytelling. When children's agendas are followed, children's

[1] This paper complements a second paper from the same data set showing how assessment and second stories show the membership and status of a peer group: Theobald M and Reynolds E (forthcoming). *In pursuit of appreciation: Assessables, group membership and second stories.*

storytelling may be "richer and more ambitious" (Nicolopoulou, 1996: 371). Narratives can show how children understand their social lives (Paley, 1981), identity (Rönnlund, 2013) and culture (Arizpe, Bagelman, Devlin, Farrell and McAdam, in press; Perry, 2008).

The developing capabilities of children are often the focus of studies of children's storytelling. Working within a developmental perspective, linguistic studies of children's stories often use an individualistic view. In other words, stories are examined in relation to a stage of development to adulthood. A view of competence from a developmental standpoint involves an assessment of children by external participants, typically adults, in relation to developmental milestones and expected characteristics, rather than a study of the "interpretive resources" used by children (Corsaro, 2014).

Less focus has been given to the interactional aspects of storytelling in children's everyday conversation and how the members themselves, the storytellers and story recipients, manage storytelling. This paper uses an ethnomethodological approach of studying children's talk to explore how children make use of particular linguistic resources to accomplish a storytelling round with peers. While the analyses examine the interactional features of children's talk, the study of talk here is not to assess their linguistic competency. Rather the aim is to investigate children's "competence-in-action" (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998) as they participated in a chain of second stories. A second story occurs when there is an observable link between an initial and following story (Ryave, 1978). For example, the stories are related by topic or by similar or contradictory point of view.

Foundational studies in interactional sociology provide a number of key understandings about storytelling. I summarise here three analytical starting points that can be used for understanding the features of a story. These are that 1) storytelling is collaborative; 2) stories have phases and 3) stories must be newsworthy.

First, storytelling, like any interactive activity, is collaboratively achieved. The activity of telling a story cannot be accomplished without two or more parties. To be told, a story needs a storyteller and a story recipient (Sacks, 1995; Jefferson, 1978; Labov and Waletsky, 1967; Norrick, 2010). Members attend to storytelling "rights". One right is that storytellers have a number of turns in order for the story to be told. Lerner's (1992) analyses of the 'West Coast'

data set showed that members are “story consociates” who assist in the telling of a story using prompts, corrections or provocations such as teasing.

Second, stories have observable phases such as prefaces, story announcements and story closings. A story is prefaced by an action that alerts recipients that a story is forthcoming (Sacks, 1986). In this way, storytelling is an activity that is “hearable” as such (Sacks, 1986). In her keystone paper on storytelling, Jefferson (1978) outlines how broad phases might be actioned. For example, story entry can be initiated using announcements or sideways shifts such as, “Oh speaking of X”. Stories provide for subsequent talk using topics from previous stories or second stories (Ryave, 1978). Story exits or closings are another observable phase of a story. Assessments offer one-way for recipients to treat stories as complete and display their affiliation with the story (Jefferson, 1978).

Third, is the “tellability” of a story (Sacks, 1995). To successfully gain a storyteller role, a story must be ‘tellable’. To be 'tellable’ a story contains items of interest to keep the attention of story recipients or contains items relevant to the context. In this way, the creation of a story is context specific, with the story designed for a particular audience and situation.

Building on these observations, this paper investigates a storytelling session in a playground to show the interactional resources used by young children to carry out storytelling. The paper investigates these questions in studying children’s displays of competence-in-action in a storytelling sequence:

1. What interactional features do storytellers use to gain the conversational floor?
2. How do storytellers develop the tellability of the story within second stories?
3. What role do story recipients have in storytelling?

In so doing, children’s competence-in-action is investigated “from within” (Speier, 1973), that is, in the act of storytelling.

The study

Data are from a larger study that video-recorded children’s everyday experiences in a school setting of a preparatory (Prep) class in an inner-city school in Queensland. Prep is a fulltime, non-compulsory program before formal schooling for children aged 4½ years to 5½ years.

Twenty-four children and one teacher participated in the study. In total 26 hours of video-recording in playground and one classroom was collected. While the larger study was interested in children's participation and social order, one extended video-recorded playground interaction (approximately 25 minutes) is explicated here in fine-grained detail to show children's participation in storytelling.

Analytic approach

The paper uses the methodological approaches of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis. An ethnomethodological approach studies the organisation of social action in the *in situ* everyday activities of members to reveal the often-unnoticed features in interactions (Garfinkel, 1967). Conversation analysis is the fine-grained analysis of the "doings" of talk-in-interaction such as turn-taking, intonation or pauses of the talk (Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 1991). Of interest is how members interpret and respond to talk and actions as interaction progresses in a sequential manner (Heritage, 1984) and the way in which they "organize and make sense of their activities in a given social context" (Goodwin, 2006: 23).

An ethnomethodological view is effective for studying the everyday practices of children from within their own worlds. The general premise for the work in this paper is that talk is a resource for interaction and management of social relations (Goodwin, 1990), and not a byproduct of play. In this understanding, children use play activities to organise social matters.

Conversational data from the video-recording has been transcribed using Jefferson (2004) transcription, enabling the interactional features of talk including overlap, pauses and intonation to be represented on paper. The punctuation marks used in the extracts depict interactional features of the talk, not the conventions of grammar. Please refer to Appendix A for an explanation of the symbols used.

Setting

During outdoor playtime, a small group of boys sat down together and shared stories. The volunteered stories were accounts of the boys' personal experience where an illness or injury happened to them or to someone they know. The children in the interaction include Mav, Nathan Toby, Jack and Paddy. All names in the transcript are pseudonyms. Drawing on the foundational

aspects of storytelling outlined earlier, the following analyses show the interactional features used by storytellers and story recipients in the talk and interaction of storytelling.

1. *What interactional features do storytellers use to gain the conversational floor?*

To be a storyteller one must gain the conversational floor. In this interaction a number of strategies are used to gain the floor. Storytellers use "pre story" announcements (Sacks, 1995) to indicate to the story recipients that a story is forthcoming. On hearing a pre-story announcement, other members recognise that utterance to be a "story" or a potential story and that a story is to follow (Sacks, 1995), as demonstrated in extract 1.

Pre story announcement claims storytelling rights –second story

Extract 1

```
1.  Mav:    umm. guess what. this is about vomiting too:,=
2.          =↑O:NCE¿ I started vomiting on our bed.
3.          and I went into my mother-[ uh-] my ↑da:d¿
4.  Jack:                              [*oh*]
5.  Mav:    and I started vomiting on ↑their ↑bed¿
6.          and it was in [the <mi:d]dle of the [*ni:ght*.>
```

Extract 1 showed Mav using an announcement, "guess what" (line 1), to gain attention from the members of the group. The indexical "this" referred to what he was about to say, as a story to follow. Mav's turn indicated to the story recipients that the topic of the story was about vomiting, also the topic of the previous story. In so doing, the story recipients were cued into the story to follow.

The story was framed with a familiar story beginning "once" (line 2). The hearable change of pitch of this word (once) marked it as an announcement. To the story recipients this was recognisable as a story beginning and enabled Mav to maintain the storytelling floor. He continued with "and-prefaced" story prefaces, as he added the details of the story. Mav used several features of a story that makes it recognisable as such, including an opening story announcement, "guess what" (line 1), which alerted story recipients that news was to follow; long stretches of talk and story closing. In this context, Mav's competence was recognised by acceptance of his participation in the core activity of the group's interaction.

Another example of a pre-story announcement is shown in extract 2, as Toby took the storytelling floor.

Pre story announcement

Extract 2

```
38. Toby:      guys. I'll tell you what happened
39.            when I was at the hospital?
40. Nathan:    only tell::- [I-  ] I think I needed to tell
41. ?:                      [↑ah!]
42.            something.=after [Mav.
43. Nathan:    um. I once vomited in my, be:d
44.            a::nd [I nee
45.           ((unrelated talk))
46. Paddy:    just be quiet.
47. Nathan:   yeah and um. I need- I telled my mum.
48.           and they needed to get this fing,
49.           so I could f-/ (.)/ vomit in there.
              /(gaze@camera)/
```

Claim to storytelling rights – same topic as preceding story

Once a storyteller has gained the floor, the storyteller is entitled to storyteller rights. Toby's opening line with an address term, "guys" and pre-story announcement, "I'll tell you what happened", alerted others that a story was to come. A pre-story announcement geared the story recipients to expect extended turns. Such activity could potentially position Toby, the storyteller, to progress the story.

Toby's story bid was unsuccessful; however, as Nathan made a claim to have higher storytelling rights than Toby, who stated, "I think I needed to tell" (line 40). His story followed a similar topic to the story that came before, that of vomiting. Nathan's claim was successful in this instance, with other members allowing conversational space for this story to continue (lines 43-59). What was constructed here was a social order of rights to tell next story – framed on notions of an explicit claim to having a story with the same topic as the preceding one. Such a social order determined the competence of the storyteller.

Extract 3 demonstrates how children make use of the resources available from their everyday lives and use these to competently meet their social agendas, as Mav showed.

Extract 3

```
60. Mav:       and ↑once? I had this really bad disease,
61. Mav:       something [really bad happen to ↑me,]
62. Nathan:              [oh I had know what disease.]
63. Mav:       .h um. hh. m- I had a swollen ↑thwoat,
64.            so I couldn't bwea:ve properly.
```

"bwea:ve" - prosodically marked for

Mav asserted a pre story announcement and bid for the conversational floor using well-known story starter "And once" (line 60). Associated with children's stories, "once upon a time". Such activity demonstrates how children draw on shared knowledge and assembled understanding of the local culture in their talk and social interaction.

Mav's use of "and" at the beginning of his turn was a public display that his story topic built on the previous story of vomiting by proffering a story of a bad occurrence, a really bad disease. Nathan claimed an affiliation to the story topic, "I know what disease" demonstrating his prior knowledge. Mav's offering was marked with a higher pitch in his voice. The elongated sound of "bwea:ve" (line 64), in conjunction with a slower paced delivery, marked the story climax and possible story completion.

Gaining access to the conversational floor is not always straightforward. The next extract showed the events when members of the group competed for the storytelling floor.

Extract 4

130.Nathan: [well-
131.Jack: [well at christmas time. my mum fell down
132. the stairs cause of (.) um <santas:> (.)
133. ↑u:::h.
134. (2.0)
135. magic dus[t.
136.Mav: [well at-
137.Nathan: well [once
138.Jack: [its really slippery.]
139.Nathan: [AND, <AND THEN WE>]need to be quiet.
um.((both arms raised))
140. (2.3)
141. I once falled do:wn. the stai:rs. my stairs.um.
142. about- nearly to the bottom?
143.Mav: oh. and once¿ everybody needs [to be ↑quie:t.]
144.Nathan: [on my tummy.]
145.Mav: [um o:nce:¿
146.Nathan: [and it really hurt.]
147.Jack: aw that[<bettER've>]hurt.=
148.Mav: [o:nce:¿]
149.Mav: =°I was just about to say.°
150. once. um.
151. (1.7)
152.Mav: I ↑fell ↑down ↑the ↑stairs.

Contestation for conversational floor

Marked announcement

Recycled story beginning

Newsworthy story item

Marked for affect

153. because I was (.) >trying to wheelbarrow down<-ok.

New information to existing story topic

In lines 136 to 139 contestation over the floor was apparent. Mav started his story "well at once" as Jack completed his story. Nathan's turn, however, is initiated at the exact moment when Jack completes his turn. Extended arms in a stop sign accompanied Nathan's talk. As well as bidding for the conversational floor, Nathan's talk claims a turn in a three- dimensional way. Combining the use of gestures, voice and physical space is multimodal (Mondada, 2008), used here by the storytellers to enforce speaking rights.

Nathan's turn (line 136), explicitly directed others to be quiet. This turn was marked with raised volume. Nathan's upgrade in embodied actions showed his treatment of Mav's turn as a hostile takeover of the floor. In Cromdal's (2001) study of Swedish children's bilingual book reading, children claimed the book reading by using prosodic markers as they interrupted. In this way they produced a hearable "competitive entry" to the activity at hand (Cromdal, 2001: 441). Nathan had earlier made a bid for a turn at storytelling (line 130) but was overrun by Jack. His choice of words "need to be quiet" silenced the group. As well as claiming space using his arms, by sitting up Nathan physically claimed authority in the storytelling session (Theobald and Reynolds, forthcoming).

Mav used the preface "once" six times in succession before he successfully gained the storytelling floor (line 150). In overlapping talk, members routinely use repetition to ensure ongoing talk (Schegloff, 1987). Mav displayed competence as he adopted the same phrase, "everybody needs to be quiet", that proved successful for Nathan in a prior turn (line 136). Mav added to the current topic, "falling down the stairs", referring to that his falling was intentional. This new information set Mav's story apart from those preceding and he was able to continue with his telling in the following lines, competently achieving his social ends.

Following on, Mav repeated a previously successful preface in an attempt to gain his turn. With Jack attending to Nathan's story ending at this point, much more work was needed. Nathan's assessment of the consequences of the story event, "and it really hurt" (line 146), was when the story was hearably complete to the recipients.

This section has addressed the first research question, highlighting the ways that storytellers gained the conversational floor. Effective techniques were pre-story announcements, explicitly tying the story to the topic of the preceding story and multimodality. The second question for investigation, how do storytellers develop the tellability of a story in a series of stories, is addressed in the next section.

2. How do storytellers develop the tellability of a story within second stories?

Sacks (1995) observed that storytellers are typically privileged to numerous turns to talk. The privileged nature of this activity does not come routinely, however; the members work at and attend to achieving this activity. Once the conversational floor is gained, storytellers must use techniques including escalation of topic, affective markers and intonation to maintain their position as storyteller and to develop the tellability of the story (Selting, 2010). Techniques evident in the storytelling extracts by the boys in this group include, using prefaces "and" "and well", "then" to continue the topic, escalation of topic, performance of topic (embodiment).

The technique of maintaining the floor was demonstrated in an embodied way by Mav in extracts 5 and 6.

Extract 5

```
107.Mav:      and um, w-↑once¿ >i had to do a tumble turn.<
108.           >and it- and it- was like this,<
               ((demonstrates 'tumble turn')   Embodiment of story
109.           °like *chw.*°
110.           (0.6)
111.Mav:      an-(0.5)an my legs were like flicking in the
             ↑air¿
112.         and I did a- <air ↑flip¿>
113.         and it was in the air.= and I did a ↑back ↑flip¿
114.         (i) went *backwards* onto the trampoline¿
115.         and nobody was on ↑it¿=erlike= an I was bouncing
             on my back.((bouncing up))   Embodiment of story
116.         dong dong [dong [dong]
```

Extract 5 showed a new story marked by Mav's opening delivered with a change in pitch saying, "-↑once¿" (line 107). The changed pitch in "↑back ↑flip¿" (line 113) and the continuing intonation at the end of each turn ensured his success holding the conversational floor. As his turn progressed, Mav's embodied talk of simulating a "tumble turn" and "bouncing" embellished

the story. His smiling voice and animated tone also worked to hold the story recipients' interest. Mav's turns were prosodically marked with continuing intonation. His turns were recipient designed to indicate that more was to follow. These resources were created *in situ* and displayed competence-in-action as he responded to visual cues of the recipients. As a result, Mav gained extended turns in the round of second stories.

Extract 6

```
164.Mav:    [*uh.* and then] I just- um- .hh went like this¿
165.        it was like- >chya<
            ((falls to the ground sitting down, hands down))
166.        and I slipped down¿ >like this.<
167.        ugh ugh ugh ugh ugh
            B   B    B   B   B     ((B=bounce))
168.Paddy:  that WOULD've hu:rt.
169.Nathan: [yeah.]
170.Mav:    [>It din't!<]
171.        it din't.it was really fun actually,=it din'hurt.=
172.Paddy:  OH:H(h)O:.[hohoho] oheh.
173.Jack:             [hohoho]
174.Nathan:           [hohoho]
175.Mav:              [It ↑di:nt ↑hurt.]
176.Paddy:  [he .h heh.]
177.Mav:    [(↑didn't ↑hurt at ↑a:ll.)]
178.        (1.8)
179.Paddy:  da:. da- that was ffun(h). I did that.
```

Embodiment of story

Assessment refuted by Mav

Response token - Laughter

Mav recycles claim

Response token aligns with teller

Extract 6 featured Mav's extended turn in which there were no competing bids. With increased performance of topic, the recipient design of Mav's talk was apparent. The story events were escalated and affect was achieved through animated sounds and embodied talk (lines 166-167). Paddy's response, "that WOULD've hu:rt." (168), backed up by Nathan (169) was refuted by Mav (170). His refute is marked by a change in pitch which made it noticeable to recipients as an unusual outcome. A round of laughter from the story recipients met Mav's claim that it was fun (line 171). This combined activity of refuting a typical outcome to the story events and the recipients' laughter worked to change the tone of the telling. Mav continues to fine-tune his achieved competence in response to laughter tokens of recipients. As he worked up jocularity through the repetition and recycling of a claim seen to be ridiculous (lines 175 and 177), Paddy's

initial response token was repackaged to align with the teller's stance, such a response demonstrating the success of the storyteller.

Further recipient design is observed in the tellings, as shown in extract 7.

Extract 7

184.Jack: and he went- and he went like this.
185. (1.5)((Jack moves uphill standing arms to side))
186.Jack: it was like a ↑*slippery* slide;
187. he din't go down like mav.
188. he had his- he had his legs str↑aight.
189. and the- and he went.=↑WEEEEEEE.=he din't go
190. bump. bump bump.=he went-
191. (0.8) ((Jack demonstrates 'going down' Paddy, Nathan and Mav smiling))
192.Paddy: I, I: did the same thing like mav.
193.Nathan: unh?
194. (1.1)
195.Paddy: HEY JACK. I DID THE SAME THING LIKE MA:V.

Embodiment of story

Paddy mimics previous story

Picking up on the humour of Mav's previous story of falling down stairs, Jack embellished the story delivery in his turn. Designed to illicit laughter from the story recipients, Jack acted the story events, drawing similarities to Mav's story while highlighting the differences of his story that he did not go "bump bump", he went "WEEEEEE" (line 189). This elaboration drew laughter from the group and Jack was successful in holding the conversational floor over a number of turns, his non-verbals building affect and maintaining the attention of Paddy, Nathan and Mav. Paddy's next turn, a claim that he too had a comical story of down the stairs like Mav (line 192), gave evidence that Mav's and Jack's competence was invoked in this interaction, as Paddy mimicked their activities.

So far I have demonstrated how storytelling was accomplished by showing examples that explicated the actions of story*tellers*. The extracts above demonstrated competence within the interactional features of storytellers. I next focus on the interactional features of story *recipients* to show how competence was constructed as story recipients progressed a story and worked toward closing.

3. What role do story recipients have in storytelling?

The actions and reactions of story recipients are integral to the development of a story (Mandelbaum, 2013). Theobald and Reynolds (forthcoming) observe that once members have

gained the floor, a collaborative approach may be evident to support the storyteller's activity of telling the story to completion. In this way, story recipients take an active role in managing the telling of the story. In the current study, story recipients observed the following interactional strategies: asking questions about the topic of the story, asking about the storyteller's emotive state, responding to the story events and co-constructing the closing of the story.

Progressing the story

Extract 8 focused on how the story recipients attended to the hearable climax of the story, an action that progressed the story.

Extract 8

```
12. Mav:     =>I had to go to< ho:s:>pita::l.<
13. Nathan:  yeah.
14.          (0.8)
15. Jack:    >did ya get really scared?<
16. Mav:     °↑not ↑rea:lly.°
…
23. Mav:     I just
24.          [got a few bandaids,]
25. ?        [we're going down the] waterfall.
26. Mav:       I just got a few <bandai:ds> on my- on my-
27  (m)      ((l-h to face) (r-h to face))
28.          on my head¿=
29.          =so i could stop ↑vomiting_ (0.6) ↑so ↑much.
30.          (1.1)
31. Mav:     I just got a few bandaids on my head.
32.          (4.8)
33. Mav:     an it rea:lly hurted. and jack they a:ll-um.
34.          and jack they a:ll- and jack they a:ll fell off
35.          at the same time.
36.          and jack a- a lot of blood was bleeding ↑out,
37.          (2.4)
38. Toby:    guys. I'll tell you what happened
```

Story recipients progress story

Marked for affect

Lack of response- recycles story item

Seeking response

Story heard as complete - Pre-story announcement

A telling is not treated as complete until sequential events that build toward a climax are heard (Mandelbaum, 2013). In extract 8, the story recipients attended to the progressivity of the story by asking questions of the storyteller. Jack's question (line 15) worked to advance the story and Mav expanded the story by adding further details about his illness. His turns were marked with emphasis and were stretched out (line 29), indicating to story recipients that the climax was near.

The lack of response from the story recipients (line 32) signaled to Mav that more work was required in order for Jack to recognise the story as complete. Mav enlarged the dramatic effect and recycled the story climax in order for other members to hear it to be complete. His turns failed to gain a response, however when Mav provided no further information, was treated as complete by Toby as evidenced by his pre-story announcement (line 38). The turns of talk and response or lack of response show how competence is a process that is achieved through interaction, and is not an existing and definitive state of being.

Extract 9 showed a different approach in gaining and holding the storytelling floor.

Extract 9

Story climax delivered upfront

79. Jack: oh- and my mum can't even breathe through her nose propley.
81. (0.5)
82. Paddy: why.

Story recipients progress story

83. Jack: cos in <gymnastics,>
...
88. Jack: cos in gymnastics, (0.5) she (.) broke (.)<her ↓nose.>
…
97. Mav: wha:t happened?=I didn't hear.
98. (0.9)
99. Jack: my mum got a broken nose in <gy:mnastics.>
100. Paddy: °oh o:h.°
101.Mav: how'd she get it?
102.Jack: awh.
103. (0.5)
104.Jack: she was doi:n one of the flying skills,
105. and she (0.3) fell.

Story recipients progress story

In extract 9, Jack presented a backwards view of a story in which he delivered the story punch line first (line 79). This "abstract" of a story is not considered a story itself because it did not include reportable events that showed causality (Labov, 2007). The ending was revealed before the hearable sequence that led to this event. An obvious next action for the story recipients was to ask a question in order for the story to be heard in full. Paddy asked "why" (line 82) to find out how this ending came to be. Jack then progressed the story and was successful in holding the storytelling floor. His competence here achieved by doing little in terms of story like behaviour such as gestures, embodiment and bids for floor.

Jack's strategy of storytelling by presenting the "punch line" was repeated at Mav's request for more details about the story. Jack provided further details and this prolonged his turn. In this way, the story recipients worked to collaboratively progress the story to completion (Theobald and Reynolds, forthcoming). Providing the ending to a story in the opening line may categorize Jack as an incompetent, unskilled storyteller. An alternate view shown here was that he was successful in holding the storytelling floor with minimal work on his part, demonstrating his competence-in-action.

Story closing

Closing is an action that is enacted by both storytellers and story recipients. In closing, storytellers present events that are sequentially complete and those that story recipients hear as complete. Story recipients closely "monitor for the possible climax of the story so that they can produce a proper response" (Mandelbaum, 2013: 499). At the completion of a long turn story recipients are presented with a hearable ending that signals an appropriate time to respond to the story or take next turn.

Extract 10 showed how storytellers made the end of a story explicit by using a "book end" closing.

Extract 10

54. Nathan: I got to have my- °this blanket on. and this
55. <<pillow.>>°= so I could get better. but I still
56. vomited. only, (.) it was starting to come
57. back.=then I was getting better.
58. (1.6)
59. Nathan: and that's how I: got better.

Hearable climax

Repeat of story item - response token sought

A hearable climax of the story was presented in line 57. This possible story ending was not received, however, and required additional work by the storyteller to make accountable and hearable that his story had ended and should be received as such by the story recipients. Using "getting" in his turn suggested to the recipients more was to come. A pause in the talk and lack of response by the story recipients indicated that more work was needed by the storyteller to make the story ending recognizable.

Next, the storyteller re-phrased the story item to make a clear and hearable closing to this story, "that's how I: got better" (line 59), "got" representing no more to follow. With the storyteller constructing "the ending as an ending" (Mandelbaum, 2013: 504), the story recipients were now signaled that the story was complete. These examples highlight the interactional work undertaken by the storytellers to progress the story and work toward competence.

Some closings are not clear-cut. A telling is not complete until the recipients "treat it as complete" and the main event or happening of the story is oriented to (Mandelabaum, 2013: 505). Examining the same data set, Theobald and Reynolds (forthcoming) showed that recipients demonstrated their uptake of the story climax by providing an assessment. Assessment encompasses analytic work by recipients (Jefferson, 1978) and can be seen as a public evaluation of a story (Goodwin, 1990).

Discussion:

An "interpretive" view offered the opportunity to study children's narratives in terms of "members work" (Corsaro, 2014;Sacks, 1995). The analyses showed how the children managed relational matters within conversational storytelling. Findings showed that children's competence was constructed through actions as both storytellers and story recipients, as invoked by the peer culture in which they participated.

Achieving a series-of-stories

In achieving a round of stories storytellers had to 1) 'listen to and analyse an in-progress story', 2) 'construct their own story utilizing the results of their prior analytic attention', and 3) 'assure that their succeeding story is seen as a successive story with definite, observable relationships to the previous story' (Ryave, 1978: 121).

Studying children's storytelling in a round of second stories, three conditions are observed to construct "competence". First, analyses highlighted the alignment and progressive hierarchy of competence emerging in the group. The stories were linked by a common topic, each fitting into the category of a story of a "bad" happening. Storytellers made claims regarding this good fit, proffering that their next story should follow. They used syntactic markers of "and' and "too" to validate a story's tellability, building on the topic in new and elaborate ways within the round of

storytelling. In this way, the next story was linked to the 'succeeding storyteller's situated achievement' (Ryave, 1978: 121).

Second, analyses showed the recipient designed nature of the stories, detailing how storytellers successfully navigated the storytelling context to hold the conversational floor. In order to progress the story, each storyteller included a more dramatic event or a more dynamic delivery than the prior storyteller. The stories were designed by topic trajectory, but with the key element of a new item or event to make the new telling unique. Features used in this storytelling round included multimodal strategies of gesture, facial and physical actions; lexical items and prosodic and voice-related markers. These features cued the story recipients to the tellability of each story, and provided affective markers for climax and endpoints within a chain of stories. Dependent on the response provided, this design led to closing and a second story or recycling of story item and further elaboration.

Third, analyses detailed the role of story recipients in progressing the tellings. This was achieved through questions and prompts that sequentially organised the events of the telling and sought emotive aspects. Story recipients also monitored the events of the story and the teller's actions to identify the climax and appropriate turn construction units at which to proffer response tokens. Story closing was shown to be a joint action, enacted moment-by-moment by both tellers and recipients. Studying children's talk and interaction showed that the complex features that make storytelling recognisable span across *all* age groups.

Cuff and Hustler (1982: 121) detailed the interactional structure of storytelling as follows:

1. Story preface
2. Acceptance
3. Story
4. Hearing/second story

Building on Cuff and Hustler's (1982) model, a fundamental structure was evident in this storytelling session as follows:

1. Pre-story announcement (story preface)
2. Story events (story)
3. Embodiment
4. Story item proffered/hearable climax

4a Response token or 4b Absence of response token

4c Recycling of story item/elaboration

5. Closing (hearing/second story)
6. Pre-story announcement - second story

Views of Competence

Examining in fine detail the interaction of children *in situ* demonstrated how the concept of competence is achieved or not. Since its departure from dominant psychological perspectives in the 1990s, the "new" sociology of childhood has challenged conventional ideas of children as passive subjects of social structures. Children's experiences are understood to be important in the here and now, rather than according to a 'stage of life' trajectory (Corsaro, 2014; Prout and James, 1997). Children are viewed as competent in the active participation of their social lives rather than as 'passive objects who are the recipients of culture' (Goodwin, 2006: 283).

Competence is the premise underpinning the sociology of childhood perspectives. Yet, competence remains largely an untheorized notion. With strong foundations in anthropological and ethnographic standpoints, drawing on participant observation and interviews, the sociology of childhood perspectives have been critiqued for providing *descriptions* of children's experience rather than conducting *detailed analyses* into the situated practices of the everyday activities of children's lives (Goodwin, 2006). Using theories that speculate and account for the relationship of people, society and culture results in an outside-in view (Speier, 1973).

Through the detailed examination of children's everyday conversation using an ethnomethodological approach, this paper contributes to understandings of competence by showing *how* competence is an interactionally achieved state of being that is in constant flux.

Conclusion

This paper sought to highlight the interactional features of children's storytelling. It showed how storytelling was used to invoke competence within peer culture. Children's competence in their social activity of storytelling was not externally assessed; rather analysis showed that competence was *enacted* and invoked *in situ.* Competence was examined turn-by-turn with regard to how it was *heard* and *accomplished* (Cuff and Hustler, 1982). This fine-grained investigation of actual social interactions provides empirical evidence of how children engage and participate in interactions as they are situated within them. Such investigation adds to a corpus of work demonstrating the complexity of children's interactional competence (Butler,

2008; Cromdal, 2004; Danby, 2002; Theobald and Danby, in press) or how children's competence is undermined (Iversen, 2014).

Competence among peers has high stakes for children. Being viewed as a competent member or not by peers has implications for social inclusion or exclusion. Social membership in peer culture is highly attended to by children (Corsaro, 2014). This current study and forthcoming work (Theobald and Reynolds) demonstrates how group membership is sought and social hierarchy is constituted in children's peer interactions. Competence remains an untheorized notion, however, this current study indicates that competence is a group phenomenon.

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APPENDIX A

Transcription Notation

Conversational data has been transcribed using the system developed by Gail Jefferson (2004). The following notational features were used in the transcript.

The following punctuation marks depict the characteristics of speech production, not the conventions of grammar.

did.	a full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone
here,	a comma indicates a continuing intonation
hey?	a question mark indicates a rising intonation
together!	an exclamation mark indicates an animated tone
you	underline indicates emphasis
¿	an inverted question mark indicates slightly rising intonation
°hey°	quiet speech
( )	the talk is not audible
(house)	transcriber's guess for the talk
...	indicates that intervening turns at talk have been omitted
(0.3)	number in second and tenths of a second indicates the length of an interval
So:::rry	colon represents a sound stretch
Dr-dirt	a single dash indicates a noticeable cut off of the prior word or sound
hhh	indicates an out-breath
.hhh	a dot prior to h indicates an in-breath
[hello]	brackets indicate overlapped speech
<stop >	speech is delivered slower than normal
>come<	speech is delivered faster than normal
((angry))	indicates a change in normal speech production and nature of it
funny	smiley voice